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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR GALVANIZES SUPPORT FOR STRICT IPR  
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ENFORCEMENT

REF: 01 ROME 5183

1. SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR MEL SEMBLER HOSTED A RECEPTION, SPONSORED BY COPYRIGHT INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS, TO SOLIDIFY SUPPORT FOR THE STRICT APPLICATION OF ITALY'S NEW ANTI-PIRACY LAW. BOTH THE AMBASSADOR AND DR. MAURO MASI, REPRESENTING THE ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER, ARTICULATED A SHARED INTEREST IN A MORE STRINGENT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR) REGIME. THE NINETY KEY INDUSTRY AND PUBLIC SECTOR IPR CONTACTS EXPRESSED THEIR SOLIDARITY AND DEDICATION TO CHANGING ITALY'S PERMISSIVENESS TOWARD IPR VIOLATIONS. THE AMBASSADOR MADE STRONG ARGUMENTS WHY ITALIAN POLICYMAKERS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS SHOULD VIGOROUSLY OPPOSE PIRACY. OUR ITALIAN COUNTERPARTS WERE ALSO FORTHCOMING WITH COMMITMENTS TO COLLABORATE IN THE FILM AND IN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARENAS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MARCH 26, AMBASSADOR SEMBLER HOSTED A RECEPTION AT VILLA TAVERNA THAT BROUGHT TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL OF THE KEY ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN ITALY'S ONGOING EFFORT TO ENFORCE ITS NEW ANTI-PIRACY LAW (REFTEL). WHILE PIRACY IN ITALY HAS DIMINISHED SINCE THE LAW REQUIRING STIFFER CRIMINAL PENALTIES ENTERED INTO EFFECT, COPYRIGHT INDUSTRIES STILL LOSE AN ESTIMATED HALF-BILLION USD ANNUALLY IN ITALY, WHERE PIRACY RATES IN EXCESS OF TWENTY PERCENT ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN WESTERN EUROPE. DR. MASI REPRESENTED THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE SIAE, THE COLLECTION AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STICKERING OF VARIOUS COPYRIGHT-PROTECTED PRODUCTS. ALSO  
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PRESENT WERE ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PASSAGE OF THE LAW, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS FROM THE FINANCE POLICE, CARABINIERI, CUSTOMS, AS WELL AS PROSECUTORS, JUDGES AND ATTORNEYS. THE PRIVATE SECTOR WAS REPRESENTED BOTH BY THE SPONSORING ASSOCIATIONS FROM THE MUSIC, FILM/VIDEO, AND SOFTWARE INDUSTRIES, AND BY REPRESENTATIVES OF INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES FROM THESE SECTORS.

3. THE EVENT WAS ORGANIZED AS A CELEBRATION OF THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE IPR INDUSTRY'S 2001 ROAD SHOW. THE ROAD SHOW, WHICH WAS ENDORSED BY THE EMBASSY, PROVIDED IN-DEPTH TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS ACROSS ITALY. THE TRAINING PROGRAM FOCUSED ON EXPLAINING THE NEW LAW, ARTICLE BY ARTICLE, AND ITS ENFORCEMENT IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL RELEVANT PLAYERS.

4. DURING THE EVENING, THE AMBASSADOR SPOKE WITH DR. GIANNI MASSARO, PRESIDENT OF ANICA, THE ASSOCIATION OF ITALIAN FILM PRODUCERS, ABOUT THE NEED TO MAKE GOOD ON PRIVATE COPY PAYMENTS WORTH USD 2.5 MILLION ANNUALLY THAT ARE OWED TO THE MPAA, THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA. DR. MASSARO SAID THAT HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY CALL A MEETING OF ANICA'S MEMBERS TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE.

5. NOT ABLE TO ATTEND WAS BRIGADIER GENERAL NINO DI PAOLO, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE FINANCE POLICE. WHEN ECONOFFS MET WITH HIM THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE GENERAL SAID THAT HE VIEWS ANTI-PIRACY AS A CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME NOT ONLY IN ITALY, BUT INTERNATIONALLY. HE ADDED THAT HIS ORGANIZATION, FOR ITS PART, WAS EAGER TO COLLABORATE ON THE RANGE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT  
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PROBLEMS, FROM IPR TO TERRORISM.

6. THE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS GAVE THE EMBASSY STRONG POSITIVE FEEDBACK ABOUT THE EVENT. THE BUSINESS SOFTWARE ALLIANCE REPRESENTATIVE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT USING RENEWED WORKING-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH OFFICIALS OF THE SIAE TO HELP RESOLVE OUTSTANDING STICKERING ISSUES. ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM A PAY-TELEVISION PROVIDER REMARKED THAT

SHE COULD NOT HAVE HEARD A BETTER MESSAGE THAN THAT WHICH THE AMBASSADOR GAVE.

17. COMMENT. WHILE THERE IS MORE TO BE DONE TO MOVE THE IPR ENFORCEMENT AGENDA FORWARD, AND WE WILL MONITOR THE PLEDGES MADE TO SEE THAT THERE IS CONCRETE FOLLOW-THROUGH, IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. THE EMBASSY'S COOPERATION WITH INDUSTRY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS BEGUN TO PAY DIVIDENDS. THE EVENING AT VILLA TAVERNA MARKED THE FIRST TIME THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BRING TOGETHER SO MANY KEY PLAYERS WHO SHARE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF IPR PROTECTION. THE EVENT HELPED US TO GALVANIZE GROWING CONSENSUS ABOUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM AND THE COMMITMENT TO FIND AND IMPLEMENT REAL SOLUTIONS. END COMMENT.

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